

DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

# Memorandum


Date: DEC 1 1 2009

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)

Subj: VHA Policy on Text Messaging While Driving

To: VISN Directors and VA Medical Center Directors

1. In the interest of improving safety on our Nation's roads and highways and to enhance the efficiency of Federal contracting, on Oct. 1, 2009, the U.S. Government enacted Executive Order 13513, Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving. This Presidential order prohibits federal employees from text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment, and encourages contractors to adopt similar safety practices.
2. In accordance with Executive Order 13513, Veterans Health Administration employees shall not engage in text messaging when:
  - a. Driving government-owned, government-leased, or government-rented vehicles or privately-owned vehicles on official government business;
  - b. Using electronic equipment supplied by the government while driving.
3. Certain employees, devices, or vehicles that are engaged in or used for protective, law enforcement, or national security responsibilities or on the basis of other emergency conditions, may be exempt from this policy.
4. Contractors and subcontractors are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or -rented vehicles or government vehicles, while driving their personal vehicles when on official Government business, or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government.
5. Network and Facility Directors shall ensure text messaging while driving is prohibited on their campuses. Additional actions should include initial and ongoing education, driver awareness, and other outreach programs for VHA employees and volunteers about the safety risks associated with texting while driving. These initiatives should also encourage voluntary compliance while off duty.
6. Questions regarding the VHA policy banning text messaging while driving should be directed to Doug Dulaney at 423-943-2058 or [douglas.dulaney@va.gov](mailto:douglas.dulaney@va.gov).

  
William C. Schoenhard